

Report of the meeting of Partners for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA)

Date and venue: 7 – 8 September 2001, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Organised by: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Participants: Existing and new members of PICTA, ECA/DISD, selected Observers (List of participants attached in Annex II)

Objectives: The meeting focused on following up of previous PICTA meetings and the future positioning of PICTA.

Agenda item 1 - Welcome

Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Chief of the Development Information Services Division at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), welcomed participants to the meeting on behalf of ECA which is acting as secretariat for PICTA. She highlighted main accomplishments of PICTA and the way forward.

Agenda item 2 - Election of officers

Mr Jac Stienen (International Institute for Communication and Development, IICD) was elected as chairperson and Mr. Guenther Cyranek (UNESCO) was elected as rapporteur of the meeting.

Agenda item 3 - Reports on major activities, programmes and projects on promoting ICTs in Africa

Association for Progressive Communication (APC)
(<http://www.apc.org>)

APC reported that their area of activity focuses on women empowerment, content development and training, and building online resources. Specific projects include 1) ICT policy monitoring – complementary to existing initiatives such as SCAN-ICT, 2) support civil society network of consultants: peer networks, 3) gender empowerment and evaluation of women networks through ICT with IDRC, 4) APC Africa Hafkin Prize, 5) training ICT awareness for the African media in collaboration with ECA, UNESCO, AU and 6) developing open source web site for civil society – to ease access to resources.

Key areas: monitoring, training, ICT awareness, free access to resources, gender issues

British Council
(<http://www.britishcouncil.org/ethiopia>)

The British Council is a member of the GKP. Some of the activities carried out by the British Council are to raise awareness on knowledge issues and to contribute to the creation of an information society. Activities so far include:

- Building the Information Community in Africa (BICA) conference in South Africa (March 1999)
- Building an Information Society (West Africa seminar, February 1998) resulted in the creation of the West African Network of Information Society (WANIS)
- Kenyan Information Society Network (KIS)
- **TASKNET**: Towards a South Asia Knowledge Network (November 1999) (<http://tasknet.nic.in>)
- Ethiopia in the Knowledge Age conference, (June 2001) (<http://www.ethiopiaknowledge.org>)
- Establishment of telecentres in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia
- DEVINET (*DE*velopment *I*nformation *N*etwork on *E*thiopia), a web based gateway for development information on Ethiopia (<http://www.devinet.org>)

Key areas: capacity building, awareness, access

Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI)

ESAMI provides ICT-training for decision-makers, and training in web design for technical staff. It is also developing an online executive MBA program and offers training in knowledge management.

Key areas: training, awareness, online learning

European Union (EU)

(<http://europa.eu.int>)

EU stressed the need to encourage PICTA members to improve ICT awareness among African governments. It was noted that funds for ICT related proposals are very limited since authority is given to African governments to decide on priority areas for funding, which does not include ICTs in most cases. However, EU funding can be made available if ICT activities are packaged as crosscutting issues into sectors like education, transport, etc.

It was also noted that cheap EIB loans could be made available for the private sector for improving infrastructure and telecommunications, ICT equipment manufacturing, etc.

Key areas: strategies for funding

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

(<http://www.idrc.org>)

IDRC has conducted three Pan African studies: telecentre projects, schoolnetworking, and community development with ICT. Other main activities include: Acacia series on the web, *CurriculumNet Uganda*, *Cyber jeune Senegal*, African content development project in local language in health, HIV/AIDS, education, e-commerce focusing on women, and SCAN-ICT: data on penetration of ICT with newly developed indicators.

Key areas: access, networking, community development, monitoring and evaluation, content development

International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
(<http://www.iicd.org>)

IICD focuses on knowledge sharing with local and international communities, empowering local organisations in using ICTs for development. It has two approaches: country program in six African countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia with round table consultation processes) and thematic networks in education, e-commerce, and e-governance.

IICD also has a Global Teenager program in 18 countries with 90 schools (in North and South). Other activities include evaluation in collaboration with InfoDev; ICT-stories, co-operation with Bellanet in learning and training, e-business with Cap Gemini, e-governance conferences, and the production of *I-connect*, an on-line newsletter on issues to do with the digital divide. IICD is a member of the executive committee of GKP.

Key areas: policy, capacity development, empowerment, knowledge production, dissemination and sharing, monitoring and evaluation

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
(<http://www.itu.org>)

ITU activities focus on infrastructure & regulations. Three activities were singled out. These were: 1) pilot projects in Africa for development, including the initiating telecentres, supporting applications, and offering training, as well as initiating pilot thematic projects – for instance, telemedicine). The ITU has been co-operating with IDRC, UNESCO, FAO and others in this area; 2) standardisation of equipment to support ICT development, and 3) lead agency for organising the World Summit on Information Society (2003 Geneva and 2005 Tunis).

Key areas: infrastructure, access and connectivity, standardisation, information security

Leland Initiative - United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
(<http://www.usaid.gov/leland>)

The Leland Initiative (LI) completed its first five years in June 2001. During this period, it has worked with more than 25 countries on policy, infrastructure and user base development activities. LI is preparing a revised strategy for the next few years that will focus on policy and regulatory capacity building; regional networks of regulators; development of course and training modules to be delivered by African universities, in partnership with universities, leading to joint Certificate and/or Advanced Degree programs (training as many as 5,000 regulatory staff in the next three years); stimulating private sector-led build-out of connectivity to secondary cities and rural areas through aggregating the markets; and building capacity among user networks such as governments, universities and the like to deploy and use new ICT approaches. Main partners are CTO, IDRC, ITU, UNECA and African Connection among others.

Key areas: policy, infrastructure, and training

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)
(<http://www.francophonie.org>)

A scientific working group has been set up to develop activities for improving French web content. It was reported that la Francophonie has a program (worth 13 Million USD) to develop French web content, similar to infodev.

Activities focus on four areas: 1) NICI implementation of information society, 2) infrastructure: connectivity and access (telecentres); partnership for collective access for young people: 48 sites in 26 countries, 3) associations for software development, and 4) distance learning, to pool resources within the francophone zone.

Key areas: content development in French, access through telecentres

PACT – Ethiopia
(<http://www.telecom.net.et/~pact>)

PACT-Ethiopia has set up a Development Resource Centre with documentation and computer training facilities for NGOs, GOs and the private sector in Ethiopia. Free services are provided for the development community. It was noted that PACT-Ethiopia is funded by USAID.

It was reported that PACT-Ethiopia has developed tools on monitoring, evaluation, reporting and information tracking and organisational capacity assessment.

Key areas: training, access to information

Panos Institute
(<http://www.panos.org.uk>)

The Panos Communication and Social Change Programme provides insight and analysis into the implications of communication technologies (both new, such as the Internet, as well as old, such as changes in radio broadcasting) for developing countries, and particularly for the poorest within these countries. The Programme includes three main strands: the ‘knowledge’ debate, analysis from the south, and international policy.

Key areas : communication, North-South cooperation

PEOPLink
(<http://www.peoplink.org>)

PEOPLink developed a tool for web catalogue and communication. It also provides training for communities at grassroots level. The activity involves dissemination of information on African culture and art, and the promotion of web catalogues made by SMMEs for western market. PEOPLink is also co-operating with ITCA/ECA in demonstrating its tool.

Key areas: developing and designing web tools and training

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
(<http://www.unicef.org>)

The Childinfo project of UNICEF was described. For political decision making, UNICEF is developing and monitoring key indicators on nutrition and health related to the position of children and women in society.

Key areas: content development

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA)
(<http://www.uneca.org/aisi>)

ECA has identified three areas of activities as a result of evaluation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII) through the African Development Forum (ADF) 1999. These are: 1) creating an enabling policy environment, including access and efficiency (NICI plans in 20 countries in 2002-2003, and regulatory environment with the support of ITU, ATU, GTZ); 2) sectoral applications in education (Schoolnet Africa, African Learning Networks, Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)), health (support to HealthNet), e-commerce (Pan African e-commerce initiative with IDRC, UNCTAD, OECD); 3) Evaluation of impact (measures of ICT penetration in African countries - SCAN-ICT with IDRC, EU, NORAD).

ECA is strengthening partnership through PICTA, DOT-Force, GKP, UN-ICT Task Force, UNSIA, etc.

One of the major activities of ECA is the setting up of the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA). ITCA has three components: training, exhibition, dissemination of development information (partners are Korea, India, Japan, CISCO, USAID, InfoDev).

ECA launched the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN) during CODI-2, held in September 2001.

Key areas: awareness, co-ordination, networking and capacity building, policy

United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
(<http://www.unesco.org>)

UNESCO is developing Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs) in Uganda, Tanzania, Benin, Mali and Mozambique in co-operation with ITU, IDRC and local partners. It has also developed a Network of Community Multimedia Centres in Uganda, in co-operation with IDRC, ITU and the Belgian Government. There is also co-operation with DANIDA in e-governance projects and Learning Networks for Educators. It was reported that a successful InfoDev project with Ghana on a public consortium for Internet access has been completed.

Co-operation from PICTA members was requested on supporting UNESCO's Regional Information Society Network in Africa (RINAF). The project areas are: 1) PC recycling, 2) web site competition in educational institutions, 3) virtual multimedia academy, 4) distance education

and online learning support, and 5) training for journalists in use of Internet and interactive media.

Key areas: public access to information, networking, content development, ICT in education, policy and implementation, multilingualism

United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) – International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)
(<http://www.unesco.org>)

IICBA has developed a virtual library in maths, language and science in English, French, Arabic and Portuguese. It is also developing virtual reality applications for science, and upgrading teacher training with support from the Indira Ghandi University. There is also co-operation in teacher training with virtual universities in Brazil for Portuguese speaking African countries.

Key areas: public access to information, networking, content development, ICT in education, policy and implementation, multilingualism

World Health Organisation (WHO) Health Internetwork
(<http://www.who.org>)

WHO reported that through its Internetwork project, it provides free access to 1200 medical journals of 5 international publishers for nurses, doctors and researchers in countries with GNP/Capita less than US\$ 1000. A request was made by the WHO representative to identify medical research institutes that can benefit from these services. WHO informed participants that the health-Internetwork system could be used for any kind of publications.

Key areas: content development, access and knowledge sharing

World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)
(<http://www.wipo.org>)

WIPO is involved in three main projects: WIPONET – integration of intellectual property resources, IMPACT – facilitation of patent protection, and Intellectual Property Digital Library Project (IPDL). WIPO is focusing on how ICTs can facilitate access to intellectual property resources.

Key areas: intellectual property rights

NOTE: *Apart from the above institutions that were represented at the meeting, there are some other institutions that were not able to participate in this meeting, but have submitted their inputs. Summary of PICTA Activity Update for all institutions that have submitted their inputs is attached in Annex IV.*

Agenda item 4 - Follow up on the outcomes of PICTA meetings (Addis Ababa 1999& Geneva 2001), ADF '99 and Committee on Development Information (CODI) 2001

ECA presented the outcomes of ADF'99 (<http://www.uneca.org/adf99>), PICTA 1999 & 2001, and CODI 2001 (<http://www.uneca.org/codi>).

Regarding ADF '99, it was highlighted that the results of ADF '99 helped in updating AISI and defining new priority areas at national, sub-regional and regional levels. The main areas identified include creating an enabling policy environment, ICT applications in education and youth, health and e-commerce. It was noted that these themes now form the revised vision and focus area for AISI.

It was noted that the ICT sub-committee of CODI 2001 has adopted recommendations that include the following: the need for strengthening co-ordination mechanism for ICT activities within Africa both at country and partners level, increased African participation in global fora, analysing the impact of ICTs on African development, and the need for developing strong partnerships with the private sector.

The recommendations of the PICTA 1999 meeting focused on strengthening participation of members and resource sharing through updating of the PICTA database and website. Participants were requested to provide the secretariat with an update of their current and future activities if not done yet. The Secretariat will ensure that information collected from members will be made available through the PICTA web site and database.

In the informal PICTA meeting during GKP meeting in Geneva, it was noted that PICTA activity was very slow in the last year. However, it was agreed that PICTA remains a very important vehicle to co-ordinate partnership in ICT activities in Africa. Therefore, PICTA has to be strengthened particularly in the area of its major objective of information sharing. The tools developed by Bellanet for sharing information among PICTA members must be used effectively. ECA offered to assign a facilitator to strengthen PICTA's information sharing activities, and the participants welcomed it.

The recommendations of the informal PICTA meeting in Geneva were:

- To link PICTA as “an African chapter of GKP”
- To associate PICTA meetings with that of GKP when appropriate, to reduce the resource burden on members arising from attending PICTA meetings.
- To use other fora that had significant numbers PICTA members in attendance, e.g. Africa Telecom meeting in South Africa to be held this year.

Agenda item 5 - Report on the results of the GKP (<http://www.globalknowledge.org>) meeting (Geneva, May 2001) and their implications for PICTA

Participants were informed of the genesis, structure, the action plan items, the membership contributions and ECA's contribution to earlier GKP activities.

The following points were discussed in relation to the May 2001 meeting of the GKP:

- The election of a new executive committee and the two African representatives therein.
- The action plan items for 2001 (Access, Empowerment, Governance, and the role of women, youth and media)
- The opportunity for PICTA members to raise PICTA related issues.

In response to the presentation, participants raised the following points:

- The issue of representation by members attending GKP events. This is reflected in terms of whether an individual will be representing PICTA or his/her institution.
- As the GKP is a platform for meeting and exchanging ideas, turning PICTA into a regional chapter of GKP will be a good contribution.
- The need to have realistic goals by PICTA on what it can achieve.
- Learning lessons from GKP in organisational representation.

Agenda item 6 - PICTA's future related to membership and activities

ECA indicated that decisions had to be made regarding PICTA membership, based on the discussion of an informal meeting in Geneva during GKP meeting in May 2001. After a series of discussions, it was agreed that membership would be open. However, selection of institutions will be made on membership requests based on their demonstrated commitment in terms of implementing projects to promote ICTs in Africa. Both new and existing members would also be required to fulfil their obligations in implementing PICTA activities. There is a need to involve local partners in PICTA from funding agencies.

With respect to PICTA's future activities, two areas were indicated by ECA: information sharing and implementing joint projects. Information sharing through available tools such as websites and discussion lists has to be encouraged. Announcement of new web content has to be improved. There is also a need to encourage joint projects among members based on mutual benefits. Developing and sharing indicators and evaluating/monitoring tools through the SCAN-ICT project has been mentioned as one of the main joint activities.

Agenda item 7 - Proposals for joint work programmes

Participants have identified the following areas as joint work programmes:

1. Strengthening information sharing

The need for publishing and distributing a PICTA newsletter was suggested and the results of the discussion was focused on the use of existing tools, namely email, web site, discussion list, etc., for exchange of information and announcement of events. It was noted that the readability of newsletters has decreased because of the increasing number and volume of newsletters currently produced and disseminated around the globe. Participants have indicated that ECA should play a co-ordinating role in information sharing. All members are requested to feed the Secretariat regularly with updated information inputs to the website and the discussion list. The representative of la Francophonie raised the language issue. ECA responded that efforts would be made to have the website and electronic discussion both in English and French. However, lack of resources has been mentioned as a major problem and members are requested to support such efforts both financially and substantively.

2. Developing a learning process

It was indicated that the learning process deals with evaluating and learning from what PICTA members are doing regarding the diffusion and utilisation of ICTs in Africa. This involves conducting joint activities such as e-readiness surveys, developing indicators, and sharing

methodologies and best practices. Participating institutions were requested to join efforts in the evaluation of the impact of ICT activities.

3. Making the voice of Africa heard

The secretariat noted that African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) is a mechanism created by ECA to make the African voice heard in international fora. It was noted that ATAC worked out the African Common Position paper (Annex III) as a contribution to the DOT Force. To avoid duplication of efforts and waste of scarce resources, this document provides guidelines for initiatives aiming at facilitating the digital inclusion of the continent.

Participants noted the need for PICTA members to recognise the existence of this position and play their advocacy role at regional and global fora such as the DOT Force, UN ICT Task Force, the New African Initiative, etc. in order to promote Africa's common position in ICT related activities.

Agenda item 8 - Suggestions for new mechanisms to strengthen PICTA

It was mentioned that PICTA's strength comes from two angles, namely its diversity of membership and its substantive activities. In this regard, the following six common issues have been identified for future endeavours as main priorities based on institutional presentations (see Agenda Item 3):

1. Policy and regulatory issues
2. Content development
3. Access (infrastructure/democratisation of access)
4. Training and capacity building
5. Networking and technical assistance
6. Monitoring and evaluation

To keep the PICTA mechanism active, the delegate from the European Union suggested the use of video conferencing facilities to hold meeting every three months. It was noted that EU could bear costs incurred in this activity to UNECA and others but not for other PICTA members. It was recommended that ECA initiate the first video-conference.

Agenda item 9 - Perspectives for the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa (UNSI) Information Technology Cluster

The UNESCO delegate made a presentation on the perspectives of UNSIA-IT cluster based on the UNSIA evaluation report. The recommendations include the need for inter-UN-agencies co-ordination, strengthening ICT as a crosscutting theme in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process, developing sub-regional UNDAF strategies, and organising an IT Cluster meeting of UN agencies (UNCTAD, UNECA, UNESCO, UNIDO, WIPO, World Bank and other interested UN agencies) on 8 December 2001 before ADF 2001.

Agenda item 10 - The way forward

Participants agreed on the following major areas for immediate actions:

- ECA should co-ordinate with Bellanet on the issue of reviving the discussion list (PICTA-CL@lyris.bellanet.org) and PICTA website.
- There is a need to identify official PICTA focal points/representatives at the level of each member institution.
- All new and existing members have to provide information to the Secretariat on their current and future activities.
- Participants were requested to disseminate the results of this meeting to their respective institutions and in upcoming regional and international events (e.g. IICD at GKP Kuala Lumpur, APC at UN ICT Task Force, and OIF at Heads of State Summit in Lebanon).
- An informal PICTA meeting is suggested during African Telecom 2001 in Johannesburg (12-16 November 2001). Furthermore, it was suggested that PICTA members should consider themselves as ambassadors for promoting ICT activities in Africa in regional and international fora.
- PICTA members are invited to participate in the ICT Focus group and exhibition for ADF 2001 (<http://www.uneca.org/adf2001>), which will focus on regional integration.

Agenda item 11 - Date and venue of next meeting

It was suggested that there was need to organise face-to-face meetings once a year around other events such as regional consultation meetings for the forthcoming World Information Society Summit organised by ITU, which will involve all regional commissions of the UN, UNESCO and other UN agencies.

The next formal PICTA meeting is planned for September 2002.

Agenda item 12 - Any other Business

IICD and PEOPLink were confirmed as new PICTA members. Other new participants will send their membership requests to the secretariat.

Agenda item 13 - Closing

Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane made closing remarks on behalf of ECA and the PICTA secretariat. She emphasised the need for members to continue their collaboration and actively share information about on going and planned activities.

ANNEX I: Agenda of the Meeting

Meeting of the Partners for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA)

Date: 7 - 8 September 2001

Venue: UNCC, Addis Ababa

Organised by: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Participants: PICTA members, ECA/DISD, selected Observers

Objectives:

The meeting will focus on following up of previous PICTA meetings and the future positioning of PICTA.

Agenda of the Meeting

Friday, September 7, 2001

09:00 Welcome remarks

09:05 Election of chairperson and rapporteur

- Members will select a chairperson and a rapporteur for this meeting.

09.15 – 10:45 Reporting on major activities, programmes and projects on promoting ICTs in Africa

All participants will have the opportunity to present their current and planned activities relating to information and communication technologies in Africa in which they would like to involve partners. The objective is to update each other and share a common information base. Information exchange is the basis for collaboration and avoiding duplication of activities.

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 – 13:00 Session continues

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

16:30 – 17:30 Follow up on the outcomes of PICTA meetings (1999, Addis Ababa & 2001, Geneva), ADF '99 and CODI 2001

- Introduced by ECA, all members will discuss the follow up activities of the meetings

17:30 – 18:00 Results of GKP meeting (Geneva, May 2001) and its implications for PICTA

Saturday, September 8, 2001

09:00 – 09:30 PICTA's future - membership

- Open it or not, and if yes, to whom and how?

09:30 – 10:00 PICTA's future - activities

- To share/exchange information only? or develop joint projects and the mechanisms that would support this activity?

10:00 – 10:30 Proposals for joint work programmes

10:30 – 11:00 Suggestions for new mechanisms to strengthen PICTA

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 11:45 Perspectives for the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa 's (UNSIAs) Information Technology cluster

Günther Cyranek, Regional IT Adviser Africa-UNESCO

11:45 – 12:30 The way forward

12:30 – 12:35 Date and venue of next meeting

12:35 – 13:00 Any other business

13:00 Closing

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ANNEX III: Common Position for Africa's Digital Inclusion: Recommendations of the Meeting on Africa's Contribution to the the G8 DOT Force and The UN ECOSOC Panel on Digital Divide, 10-12 May 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

COMMON POSITION FOR AFRICA'S DIGITAL INCLUSION

The African Information Society Initiative (AISI) is a mission statement for Africa's quest to bridge the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world, and to speed the continent's entry into the information age. AISI is regarded as a guiding framework on which to base information and communication activities in Africa. AISI was adopted by the twenty-second meeting of ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1996 and OAU Council of Ministers meeting in its Sixty-Fourth Ordinary Session held in Yaounde, Cameroon, from 1 to 5 July 1996. Furthermore, the AISI was endorsed by and the African Regional Telecommunication Development Conference, organised by the ITU and held in Abidjan in May 1996.

Even though Africa had put in place its vision through AISI since 1996, there is still lack of adequate support to speed up the process of Africa's digital inclusion. Africa needs all forms of support in implementing the action framework as envisioned in AISI. Existing and new initiatives such as the G8 DOT Force and UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Information and Communication Technologies Taskforce should consider the implementation of AISI in the context of a knowledge-based global economy.

As a response to the globalisation process and the challenges of the Information Age, and in order to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the AISI initiatives, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) conducted the first edition of the African Development Forum (ADF '99) under the theme: "the Challenge to Africa of Globalisation and the Information Age", held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24 -28 October 1999. Since the launching AISI, a series of project ideas have emerged for implementation by African countries in co-operation with international development partners and the private sector, such as the African Connection project, the UNDP African Internet Initiative and the Continental Integrated Information Network, and UNESCO's Regional Informatics Network for Africa, and IDRC's Acacia programme.

The meeting on Africa's contribution to the DOT Force, which was held on 10-12 May 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, made the following recommendations, which reflect Africa's position to global fora on ICTs including the G8 DOT Force, ECOSOC, United Nations Task Force, World Economic Forum, etc.

A. Information and Communication Technology Policies, Strategies and Regulation

In order to create the much needed enabling environment for the development of the African Information Society, there is the need for each African country to develop its own National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans and strategies, while co-ordinating its efforts with other African countries. Countries that have done so need to be encouraged to implement concrete programmes.

Utmost support is required for African countries in their efforts to establish plans for the development of national information infrastructure. It is stressed that Africa's Information Society must be seen as integral with the Global Information Society. Specific recommendations include:

- Organising national and sub-regional workshops to bring together all the stakeholders (government, development agencies, regional and international organisations, the private

sector, NGOs, etc) and facilitate dialog and debates on issues related to the African Information Society;

- Establishing ICT bodies at the very high level of political leadership;
- Setting up liberalisation and privatisation strategies;
- Providing expertise and training to national regulators;
- Creating a network of African regulators;
- Developing a set of indicators to evaluate the progress of the regulatory institutions in meeting national priorities;
- Conducting advisory missions in countries which are ready to embark on development of National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policies and strategies;
- Promoting private sector leadership in implementing national projects and partnerships;
- Strengthening the operations of African networking groups such as AFNOG (African Network Operator Group), AfriNic (African Network Information Centre), etc.; and
- Establishing sub-regional ICT centres of excellence.

B. Improving Connectivity and Access to Information in Africa

It is necessary to upgrade and develop telecommunication infrastructure and information networks at the national level as well as to improve regional inter-connectivity and to provide gateways to international telecommunications and information networks. Equitable access must be ensured to all sectors of the society -rural or urban, poor or rich, educated or illiterate, etc. The role of the private sector in harnessing connectivity should be emphasised.

The telecommunication sector in Africa, which is characterised by low bandwidth, state monopoly and hence high subscription rates for connectivity, can be improved by bringing in the local and international private sector to team up with government and all the stakeholders in promoting cost-sharing mechanisms. In this regard, establishment of a strong independent regulatory body in each country is required. Capacity building in regulatory issues is much needed from international partners. Specific recommendations include:

- Supporting connectivity projects (e.g., community information centres) to facilitate access to Internet (urban and rural);
- Supporting Research and Development activities for developing low cost access in African countries;
- Facilitating communications within government and between government and the citizens, to improve government efficiency and transparency;
- Supporting the development of sub-regional and regional telecommunication backbones and information networks;
- Supporting projects to assess and monitor the development of Africa's Information Society (e.g., e-readiness projects, Scan-ICT project, etc.);
- Empowering production and dissemination of local content, with special emphasis on indigenous knowledge; and
- Supporting Internet access for community radios to improve reach out (including Internet training for journalists).

C. Building Human and Institutional Capacity

Learning and teaching systems need to be put in place to allow aggressive responses to the challenges of globalisation, including trade and commerce. A pragmatic, practical, innovative youth and education programme is needed. The use of ICTs promises the potential to dramatically cut costs and improve the quality of both formal and informal training and education. Education and training should be considered as a vital priority to promote equal opportunity for people in all

countries to participate in and benefit from Africa's Information Society. Integration of ICTs in the curriculum and teacher education and training have to be strengthened as teachers are multipliers for knowledge in the use of ICTs.

There is a strong need to strengthen E-education initiatives in Africa, which includes the proposed African Learning Network. Attracting the African Diaspora to transfer knowledge to young Africans must be encouraged. Furthermore, the Diaspora must be given the chance to establish value added information services that promise jobs and economic growth. Recommendations include:

- Strengthening distance learning initiatives in Africa by:
- Establishing and maintaining interactive and distance learning systems between educational establishments at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- Supporting school networks (e.g, SchoolNet), university networks (e.g., VarsityNet) and networks of research institutes (e.g., African Knowledge Network Forum -AKNF); and
- Supporting networks for marginalised people (e.g., Out of School Youth Network-OosyNet).
- Developing capacities for participation in WTO negotiations and other fora;
- Establishing mechanisms/tools (networks, databases, etc.) to harness the contribution of African Diaspora in education; and
- Building local capacities and creating ICT jobs at the local level in order to retain skills and empower local communities.

D. Implementing Sectoral Information Society Initiatives in Africa

Opportunities for business and trade

With access to the global information infrastructure Africa can be a full partner in the global economy. Africa could become highly competitive in e-business, especially in services, creating thousands of new enterprises and millions of jobs in Africa. Therefore, initiatives that will promote e-business in Africa have to be supported and encouraged. Recommendations include:

- Establishing, co-ordinating and monitoring frameworks for e-business in Africa (regulatory and legal frameworks, cyberlaws, etc.);
- Supporting the establishment of training institutions focused on producing the management and workforce required for building the knowledge economy and undertaking e-business activities;
- Supporting projects aimed at encouraging the organisation and promotion of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) in Africa with e-business orientation;
- Encouraging e-business applications at local level, e.g., by setting up telecentres and community information centres;
- Creating the enabling environment for e-business including financial, banking, insurance and logistics systems;
- Strongly encouraging government as an early adopter and model user of e-business (e-government). Government should sub-contract the local private sector.

Opportunities for Health Care

Information and communication technologies can play a substantial role in mitigating some of Africa's problems in the health sector. It can do this by improving access to health services in rural areas, underpinning public education campaigns to promote healthy behaviour, transferring

diagnostic information to specialised centres, strengthening the basis for decision making, promoting information exchange among researchers and students, and enhancing the effectiveness of health institutions. Specific recommendations include:

- Establishing a network of health professionals;
- Developing multimedia health information systems, databases and websites;
- Using ICTs to facilitate delivery of health care services;
- Creating and strengthening telemedicine projects to leverage local resources;
- Instituting specialised training for health professionals especially in continuing medical education;
- Specially emphasising the use of ICTs in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa; and
- Supporting the establishment of African centres of medical excellence and promoting co-operation and exchange of expertise.

Conclusion: Forging Partnership and Commitment

There is a need to strengthen national capacities to address information policy issues and initiatives in the areas of policy and strategy, connectivity, capacity building, and sectoral opportunities especially in business and trade and the health sector. All concerned stakeholders have to commit themselves to specific actions and support all efforts associated with the development of the African Information Society. Particularly, the development community and the private sector should support the implementation of specific programmes at country and regional levels in order to ensure Africa's digital inclusion. The UN country teams are requested to reflect a strong role of ICT for development as part of the UNDAF (Development Assessment Framework) process.

Participants of the meeting, as ATAC members and African representatives to the DOT Force, call upon regional, international, bilateral and non governmental organisations including the G8 member countries, United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO, ITU, WHO, the World Economic Forum, the World Bank, the European Union, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and Agence de la Francophonie, to support the implementation of the recommendations set out herein and consider this communiqué as a Common Position on Africa's digital inclusion.

Meeting of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and African Members of the DOT Force

10 - 12 May 2001, Addis Ababa

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ANNEX IV: PICTA Activity Update Report

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.)*
Summary of the Activity (ies):

In a unique partnership with ECA and InfoDev/World Bank, Cisco has established a Cisco Networking Academy Program at the Information Technology Centre for Africa located in the United Nations Conference Centre, ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Through the end of 2002, a total of 52 women will be selected from across Africa to attend a residential training program - an ICT "incubator." The IT training course is a comprehensive 280 hour curriculum that trains students how to design, build and maintain computer networks - preparing them for an industry standard CCNA certification. Employing an e-learning model, the Networking Academy Program delivers web-based educational content, online testing, student performance tracking, hands-on labs and instructor training support. Additionally, through the ECA African Centre for Women, the course participants take part in training on gender and development, entrepreneurship and management for African women and information in Africa awareness. Upon completion of the program, the women are expected to return to their own countries with enhanced opportunities to gain employment in the IT area, start their own business, serve as role models for women in Africa and hopefully take on leadership roles in the development of ICT's on the continent.

Partners : *UNECA, InfoDev/World Bank*

Future plans:

The Cisco Networking Academy Program exists in 133 countries, including 28 Least Developed Countries. To learn more about the program please visit the website: www.cisco.com/edu and for more on the LDC Initiative: www.cisco.com/edu/ldci

European Commission

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Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Policy awareness*
Summary of the Activity (ies):

The European Commission monitors the European Development Fund, which is the single largest ODA fund on earth. It is mainly the transport sector and rural development that benefits from the EDF.

It should be feasible to fund projects in traditional sectors like health, governance, medicine, etc. that make use of advanced technologies so that Africa can step in the new economy. However any application should be tailored according to the real needs in Africa.

*The **European Community** has taken an active role in the various international policy initiatives. As a donor the EC is gradually enlarging and diversifying its portfolio in ICT and development.*

Within the European Development Fund there are several projects with ICT components but no major one specifically devoted to information society. Such a program is being currently appraised for the Indian Ocean Islands.

*The **European Investment Bank** for its part has lent support to a number of telecommunication projects in developing countries designed to extend and modernise fixed and mobile telecom networks. This support accounted at about EUR 750m in last five years.*

*Further EC action in the area of ICTs and development co-operation will take place within the strict context of the new EC development policy, and notably its **six priority sectors**.*

- *Trade and Development*
- *Regional integration and co-operation*
- *Support to macroeconomic policies and promotion of equitable access to social services*
- *Transport*
- *Food security and sustainable rural development*
- *Institutional capacity building*

Planning, programming and implementation will follow normal procedures and existing funds will be used.

Country and Regional Strategy Papers are the reference document.

*Incorporating ICTs in CSP/RSP will ensure '**ownership**' by the country or region concerned as well as differentiation and prioritisation according to needs and policy situation.*

*Once it is decided in the context of a CSS or RSS to undertake specific activities in the field of ICTs and development, the EC would usually follow a '**multi-stakeholder**' approach both at international and national level.*

*It is important that the current provisions on **complementarity and coordination** with the Member States' aid agencies, be effectively applied.*

Partners: *Info-DEV, IICD, ITU, DIFD*

Future plans: Information and Communication Technologies offer enormous opportunities, when correctly applied, to decrease social and economic inequalities and to support sustainable local wealth creation.

The decision to embrace these new opportunities belongs to developing countries themselves and the relevant stakeholders, notably the local communities. Ownership by them is indispensable.

The EC will support and use ICTs not as a priority sector, but rather as a tool to achieve the objectives within the focal areas and cross-cutting themes of the new EC development policy. ICTs are not to be considered in isolation, but as part and parcel of an overall development strategy and the policy dialogue with beneficiary countries.

There is room for integrating ICTs in the 8th SADC Regional Indicative Programme and for including it in the Eastern and Southern Africa regional programming under the 9th EDF. Procedurally the requests must come from our recognised partners, eg SADC, COMESA, rather than TRASA, AC or WEF. Substantially ICTs have to be tools of a chosen focal sector, rather than a self-standing sector. Whether it is environmental protection/natural resource management, or strengthening of regional markets, or regional capacity building, ICTs have a role to play: environmental monitoring and information; regional e.commerce initiatives; telecom regulatory convergence at regional level; strengthening of regulatory authorities; ICT skills development; IT-supported regional education.

For more 'commercial-type' investments, like the strengthening of regional telecom trunk lines, actors like the EIB could be considered.

Grass-root initiatives like community telecenters seem to be more appropriate in the context of national programs .

What has been missing so far is a clear statement of interest and a 'yessable' proposal coming from our recognised regional partners.

International Development Centre (IDRC) – Acacia

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Areas of PICTA Activity (ies) in the past year : *Policy awareness, Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.)*

Summary of the Activity (ies): *Extensive ICT involvement in Southern, East and West Africa.*

Partners : *Many other organizations*

Future plans: will continue ICT4D programming through Acacia for at least another 4 years.

International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.)*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) assists developing countries to realise sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The driving force behind IICD activities is that local 'change agents' themselves identify and develop proposals for realistic ICT applications – local ownership forms the essential basis for sustainable socio-economic development. Acting as a catalyst, IICD's three-pronged strategy is mainly delivered through a series of integrated Country Programmes. First, IICD facilitates ICT Roundtable Processes in selected developing countries, where local stakeholders identify and formulate ICT-supported policies and projects based on local needs. Second, working with training partners in each country, Capacity Development activities are organised to develop the skills and other capacities identified by the local partners. Third, IICD draws on its global network to provide information and advice to its local partners, also fostering local information exchange networks on the use of ICTs for development. The best practices and lessons learned are documented and disseminated internationally through a Knowledge Sharing programme. In support of these activities, IICD invests in the development of concrete partnerships with public, private and non profit organisations, thus mobilising knowledge and resources needed by IICD and its local partners. Country Programmes are currently being implemented in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Partners:

Burkina Faso

Delegue National a l'Informatique Cenatrin (Delgi)

University of Bobo Dioulasso

University of Ouagadougou
<<http://www.zcp.bf>> *Zongos Consulting and Productions*

Ghana

<<http://www.cict.org.gh>> *Centre for Information and Communication Technology (CICT)*
<<http://www.epa.gov.gh>> *Environmental Protection Agency EPA*
<<http://www.isoc.gh.org>> *Internet Society of Ghana (ISOG)*
<<http://www.mofa.gov.gh>> *Ministry for Food and Agriculture (MOFA)*
Ministry for Health Policy, Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
Ministry of Communication
Rescue Mission Ghana
University Cape Coast
University of Legon

Mali

<<http://www.sotelma.ml>> *Sotelma*
<<http://www.anais.org/Fr/pays/mali/index.html>> *ANAIS Mali*
Cenafob
Datatech
Ministry of telecommunications
Ministry of Culture

Tanzania

<<http://www.issaminternational.co.tz>> *ISSAM International: Business Care Services (BCS)*
Computing Centre Community Tele-Center Limited
Finance and Enterprise Development Associates Ltd. (Feda)
Mwanza Information & Technology
National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
Safima Co ltd.
Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environment Organisation (TaTEDO)
University of Dar es Salaam

Uganda

<<http://www.parliament.go.ug>> *Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK)*
Computer Society
Internet Society Uganda (ISOC-Uganda)
Rank Consult ltd.
Uganda Debt Network
Uganda Online
<<http://www.worldbank.org/worldlinks>> *WorldLinks:*

Zambia

<<http://www.dispatch.co.zm>> *Information Dispatch*
Firstnet
Ministry of Education (BESSIP)
Royal Netherlands Embassy
New Millenium Corporation
<<http://www.coppernet.zm/>> *Coppernet Solutions Ltd*
TEVETA
<<http://www.zambiz.co.zm/assoc/znfu.htm>> *Zambia National Farmers Union*

Future plans: *On IICD website <http://www.iicd.org> <<http://www.iicd.org/>> you will find the plans for these countries.*

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Monitoring and evaluation – SCAN-ICT*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

The Scan-ICT project is a project aiming at building capacity in Africa to collect, organize and analyze information on the diffusion and utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in various sectors of the national economy. The data collected is believed to feed into decisions on ICT investments. The Scan-ICTs employs a methodology consisting of various indicators developed based on the themes and strategies identified by the African Information Society Initiative (AISII) to develop the information and communication infrastructure of the continent, e.g., infrastructure, sectoral applications, human resources, etc. Activities include: selecting one or more sectors for study, planning the baseline study, collecting data, organizing data, analyzing data, preparing the national scan profile of the sector. The Scan-ICT process is also expected to test and verify the methodology in use and refine existing indicators and add new ones. Six countries, namely, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Morocco, Senegal and Uganda, have been selected to undertake baseline studies and publish a national Scan profile.

Partners: *International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada, the European Union, and the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD).*

Future plans : *Future plan includes participation in the e-readiness assessment project of the InfoDev (World Bank)*

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Policy awareness - NICI*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

The National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) development process is aiming at assisting member States in defining a national Information and Communication strategies and policies to give directions to the harnessing and integrating the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate the socio-economic development of countries in Africa. Activities in this project include: needs assessment, conducting sensitization and high level policy workshops, preparation of the draft plans, holding validation workshop, preparation of the policy document, setting up co-ordination and implementation organs, and Candidates for assistance include: Central Africa Republic, Djibouti,

Partners: *The funds to support current project activities come from the European Union (EU).*

Future plans: *Plan includes bringing more countries onboard.*

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Monitoring and evaluation – World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

- *To develop an African capacity in the protection of African traditional knowledge, electronic commerce, and global communications.*
- *To disseminate pertinent information on the central role of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in development, and to ensure better protection of IPRs to contribute to economic development.*

Partners : *World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)*

Future plans:

- *Joint advocacy and advisory services to encourage an enabling policy environment for e-commerce activities in Africa*
- *Collaborating in the promotion and development of the NICI plans, policies and strategies in Africa*
- *Cooperating in the deployment and delivery of WIPONET components and services in Africa.*
- *Designing and assisting in implementing jointly, with the Information Technology for Africa, training programmes for different target groups on intellectual property related themes.*

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Infrastructure development and Internet connectivity - French Cooperation*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

- *Improving ECA Web/Internet presence and activities*
- *French expert in ICT to develop ECA's web resources*
- *Developing the French Web Site of the Economic Commission for Africa*
- *Enriching the ECA Web Site with francophone contents on development projects undertaken in French speaking African countries.*

Partners: *French Cooperation*

Future plans:

- *Developing and strengthening web resources of ECA's Sub Regional Development Centers to promote information on regional integration*
- *Capacity building in the Information Technology Center for Africa's (ITCA) training programs*

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Contact Name: *Mrs. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane*

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Policy Awareness, Infrastructure development and Internet connectivity , Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.), Monitoring and evaluation*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

Under the framework of strengthening the African voice in international fora, ECA is one of the main players in fostering African debate on development issues. The "Global Compact with Africa" as drafted by ECA, is exemplary in this respect. It contains an innovative agenda for development cooperation in the future. It will be further refined in order to serve as an operationalization of the "New African Initiative", as adopted by the OAU-summit in Lusaka of July 2001. Promoting ICTs for development is one of the key programme within both the "Global Compact for Africa" and the "New African Initiative".

Partners: *Government of Netherlands*

Future plans: *Implementation of some of the AISI programmes and activities as a component of the "Global Compact with Africa" and the "New African Initiative"*

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)**

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.)*

Partners: *India, Japan, Korea, UNCTAD*

Future plans: *A study tour for selected businessmen from different African sub-regions to visit the Asia-Africa Investment and Technology Promotion Centre (AAITPC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in-house e-commerce software development and show casing. Networking of African Trade Points.*

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)**

Contact Name: Makane Faye
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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Policy awareness*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

*ECA has awarded a scholarship for 26 African women for a training course on **Internet Networking Technology** at its Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA). This is a two batches program for Anglophone and Francophone African women. The first batch which was launched on 2nd August 2001 is for Anglophone women and will be followed by the Francophone on February 2002.*

Partners : *InfoDev, Cisco Systems Inc., The republic of Korea, USAID, OPEC*

Future plans: *Train 20 Francophone African women on Internet Networking Technology*

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)**

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Policy awareness*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

To help Ethiopian journalists play a catalytic role in the use of ICTs for development endeavors in Ethiopia, ECA organized ICTs and Internet awareness training for Ethiopian journalists under the title ICT applications and its future for media.

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)**

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies): *Policy awareness*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

Following requests from several African Ambassadors based in Addis Ababa, ECA organized a series of training workshops on ICTs and Internet use for the benefit of African Ambassadors at its Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA).

Partners: *USAID, The Republic of Korea*

Future plans:

- *Train the Ambassadors on additional ICT topics*
- *Train first counselors*
- *Train heads of UN agencies and development organizations based in Addis Ababa*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

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Main Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Policy awareness, Infrastructure development and Internet , connectivity , Sectoral applications (e-commerce, health, education, etc.), Monitoring and evaluation*

Summary of the Activity (ies) :

UNESCO through its intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), together with ECA, is a lead agency on the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNISA) programme cluster on Harnessing Information Technology for Development (HITD). The cluster deals with the promotion of information and communication technologies for socio-economic development for Africa and is

closely tied to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), launched in 1996 as an action framework approved by ECA Conference of Ministers for elaboration and implementation of National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) plans in Africa.

The Regional Information Society Network for Africa (RINAF) is a framework for cooperation within UNESCO's intergovernmental Information For All programme which was initiated in 1992 to strengthen the capacity of the public sector and the civil society in Africa to exploit information and communication technologies for development. RINAF is working to include all societal sectors including rural, isolated and other disadvantaged communities. 43 African countries are now participating in RINAF through national focal points.

Some of the major "Digital Divide" bridging initiatives underway in Africa within the UNESCO programme are: Infoethics, Learning Networks for African Educators, E-governance for African municipalities, Community telecentres and multimedia centres, Endogenous applications and public domain content, and Capacity building and human resource development.

Partners : *among others DANIDA, ITU, UNDP, World Bank*

Future plans: *For the future RINAF has identified a number of priority additional action areas for regional cooperation: RINAF Virtual Multimedia Academy, RINAF Web site design competition, RINAF Distance Education Project, RINAF PC recycling project*

Additional Comments: *For these four UNESCO RINAF projects funds are needed: RINAF Virtual Multimedia Academy, RINAF Web site design competition, RINAF Distance Education Project, RINAF PC recycling project*

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

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Major Area of PICTA Activity (ies) : *Research*

Summary of the Activity (ies):

The UNRISD Infotech programme studies the implications of the digital revolution for developing countries. It publishes papers and books on the evolution of global IT policies, and the likely impact of these changes on development options. It also sponsors new research by Third World scholars and activists on the way new information technologies are being integrated into their economies and societies. For more information see

www.unrisd.org/infotech

Partners: *The UNRISD Infotech programme usually works with individual consultants. Its primary funding has come from the Minister for Development Co-operation of The Netherlands.*

Future plans:

During 2001, UNRISD is completing a two-year research project on Information Technologies and Social Development in Senegal. Drawing on the experience gained during this project, the Institute plans to launch similar research efforts in other Third World countries.

Two books are currently in preparation: The Beginners' Guide to Global Media Governance (Rowan and Littlefield/UNRISD, paperback, 2001); and Les NTIC et le développement social au Sénégal, Khartala/UNRISD, 2002). Others will follow. Over a dozen papers and essays have also been published by the UNRISD Infotech programme and/or are available online. Six to eight more will be

published in the coming year, including some commissioned specially for the World Summit on the Information Society.